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**POLICING AND PSYCHOPATHY:  
THE CASE OF ROBERT PHILIP HANSSEN**

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**ABSTRACT**

The psychological construct of psychopathy has received considerable attention in the extant research. This is especially the case with respect to explaining the behavioral and personality dynamics of various offenders and criminal groups. Recently, the efficacy of the psychopathy concept has been extended outside the correctional context and applied to individuals and collectives in various organizational settings. One such environment, not yet subjected to scrutiny, is the occupation of policing where corruption and other integrity-based violations occur. This article examines the utility of the psychopathy construct for explaining the extremely violent behavior and personality structure of Robert P. Hanssen. Hanssen was a former FBI agent convicted of 15 counts of espionage. He exchanged highly classified government information (including nuclear war plans) to the former Soviet Union and Russia in return for money and diamonds. As a federal law enforcement agent, his wrongful acts were considered by many to be among the most devastating to national security in United States history. Several very provisional implications stemming from the case study analysis are provided, especially in relation to police ethics.

## INTRODUCTION

On May 11, 2001 Robert Philip Hanssen was found guilty on 15 counts of espionage against the United States. For 22 years, Robert Hanssen sold secrets to Russia and the former Soviet Union while working for the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI). Most significant were secrets involving the identities of U.S. under cover operatives, classified eavesdropping technology, and nuclear war plans (Vise, 2002). Driven by seemingly inexplicable motives, Robert Hanssen's calculated and well-planned crimes resulted in the disclosure of highly sensitive information to foreign governments and the brutal deaths of at least two double agents working for the United States. Once the extent of his crimes were fully revealed, Hanssen's espionage was considered by the government as among the most damaging to national security in United States history. He was ultimately sentenced to life in prison and remains in custody at the Supermax federal prison in Florence, Colorado.

The disturbing acts committed by Robert Philip Hanssen represent a thoroughly egregious form of criminal behavior. As such, his case provides a unique opportunity for exploring the nature of extreme criminal conduct within the context of policing. However, most accounts about Robert Hanssen to date focus on the sensationalistic dimensions of his wrongful actions (e.g., see Shannon & Blackman, 2002; Schiller & Mailer, 2002; Vise, 2002, Wise, 2003). Although the aforementioned literature is based on expertly researched factual reports of Mr. Hanssen's life, these "true crime" portrayals do not enable academics, policymakers, and practitioners to meaningfully access the reasons for his illicit conduct vis-à-vis his personal background and personality structure. Perhaps more importantly, the dynamics of extreme criminal behavior and violence – especially within the context of policing – are not well

understood. While there have been noteworthy efforts directed at ascertaining the fundamental character of violent crimes committed against (and by) the police (e.g., Toch, 1992) as well as studies of officer corruption (e.g. Barker, 1996; Claussen-Rogers & Arrigo, 2004; Delattre, 1994; McCafferty, Souryal, & McCafferty, 1998; Sechrest & Burns, 1992), there have been far fewer in-depth examinations of instances where law enforcement personnel engaged in violently extreme behavior.

To be sure, criminological, sociological, and psychological research has significantly expanded our understanding of violence and criminal behavior within the past century (Englander, 2002). In particular, the fields of clinical and forensic psychology have been especially instrumental in assessing the association between violence and psychopathy and other personality disorders (Gacono, 2000). For instance, investigators have observed that violence is an inherent diagnostic feature of Antisocial Personality Disorders (including psychopathy) and have noted a strong connection between psychopathy and violence (Shipley & Arrigo, 2001; Swanson et al., 1990; Toch, 1998). Moreover, numerous replicated findings provide convincing evidence that psychopathy is a significant predictor of criminal activity and violent recidivism (e.g. Hare, 1991; Harris, Rice, & Lalumiere, 2001; Meloy, 1992; Quinsey, Harris, Rice, & Cormier, 1998).

In addition, specialists in the field of violence have supplied valuable academic and practical insight into the structural, cultural, and historical aspects of this behavior within individual, institutional, and societal contexts (e.g., Barak, 2003; Englander, 2002; Toch, 1992). Moreover, the phenomenon of aggressive violence has long been a topic of considerable interest with a voluminous array of published literature (e.g., Bandura, 1973; Gilligan, 1996; Moyer, 1987; Wolfgang & Ferracuti, 1967). Although these and other important works provide useful

typologies, theoretical models, and in-depth examinations regarding the dynamics of violence, the psychiatric construct of psychopathy has not been previously utilized as a prism for understanding the genesis and manifestation of extreme violence. Moreover, the relative dearth of scholarship regarding the association between violent crime and psychopathy within the context of law enforcement makes this relationship a most suitable topic for systematic inquiry.

Mindful of the grave nature of Hanssen's crimes and the established association between psychopathy and violent criminal behavior, the phenomenon of extreme violence is examined through the lens of psychopathy. As we contend, psychopathy provides a useful framework in which to understand the particularly incomprehensible form of criminal conduct exhibited by Robert Philip Hanssen. Notwithstanding the utility of such an approach, labeling Mr. Hanssen's wrongdoing merely psychopathic is arguably reductionistic. Indeed, Hanssen's personal background and ongoing behavior is suggestive of more complex dynamics. Therefore, while it is certainly useful to explore his conduct within the context of psychopathy, the nature of his crimes implicates a realm of understanding that encompasses this psychiatric condition but extends well beyond its theoretical and clinical parameters. In our view, confining an explanation of Hanssen's (or any offender's) behavior to the domain of psychopathy misses the wider, macrological contexts in which extreme violence emerges and sustains itself.

In order to investigate the identified subject matter, our method of inquiry relies on the instrumental case study approach (Cresswell, 1998; Stake, 1995). Historically, case study research has been used by decision-makers, historians, political scientists, psychologists, and other academic researchers for systematic analysis and exposition (Stake, 1998). Through the comprehensive data collection process and the richly detailed descriptions afforded by the instrumental case study method, an examination of the relevant issues (i.e., psychopathy,

violently extreme behavior, and law enforcement) and an interpretation of the life narrative (i.e., Hanssen) can be supplied (for recent applications of this approach in criminal behavior studies see, Arrigo & Griffin, 2004; Bell & Fox, 1996).

Sources of data for this study include an extensive use of public domain documents, reports, and texts specific to the life history, employment, behavior, and crimes of Robert P. Hanssen. We believe the case study approach is well-suited for this particular type of inquiry. In short, it enables a more thorough and accessible depiction of the extreme conduct engaged in and the crimes committed by Robert Philip Hanssen. This is especially salient, given our unique focus on psychopathy and policing where in-depth, richly descriptive commentary is sorely lacking in the extant research.

Accordingly, in this article, psychopathy, violence, and policing are examined through the high-profile and controversial case of Robert P. Hanssen. In order to address these matters, the literature on psychopathy is reviewed, mindful of its relationship to violence. In addition, Mr. Hanssen's life narrative, including his social, psychological, and family history from childhood to adulthood, is chronicled. Next, the pertinent commentary on psychopathy is applied to the case at hand. At issue here is the extent to which this psychiatric condition furthers our understanding of extremely violent (and criminal) behavior within the realm of law enforcement as typified through Hanssen's life narrative. Finally, several tentative and speculative implications stemming from the analysis are identified, especially in relation to police ethics. In particular, these include suggestions linked to the prevention, prediction and explanation of police corruption (i.e., integrity violations) and the need for future research on psychopathy and violence in the field of law enforcement.



## PSYCHOPATHY

While a detailed presentation of the history and evolution of psychopathy is beyond the scope of this paper, some background information is warranted. The present-day construct of psychopathy has evolved from several hundred years of clinical (and criminological) inquiry by American and European behavioral and social scientists (Arrigo & Shipley, 2001; Berrios, 1996; Millon, Simonsen, & Birket-Smith, 1998). As noted by Millon et al. (1998), "psychopathy was the first personality disorder recognized by psychiatry. The concept has a long historical and practitioner tradition, and in the last decade a growing body of research has supported its validity..."(p.28).

As a psychological construct, psychopathy has developed into an empirically measurable syndrome (Hare, 1991) and has become increasingly significant within the field of criminal justice. For example, empirical evidence exploring the correlation between psychopathy and crime has been consistently demonstrated by studies examining both juvenile delinquent (e.g. Forth & Mailloux, 2000; Frick, Barry, & Bodin, 2000; O'Neill, Lidz, & Heilbrun, 2003) and adult offender (e.g. Heilbrun et al., 1998; Poythress, Edens, & Lilienfeld, 1998) populations. Relatedly, the significance of psychopathy as a predictor for recidivism in general, and for violence specifically, also is well established (e.g. Dolan & Doyle, 2000; Hart & Hare, 1998; Salekin, Rogers, & Sewell, 1996; Serin, 1991; Hemphill, Hare, & Wong, 1998; Yarvis, 1995). Such empirically sound and convincing evidence supports the assertion that "psychopaths are difficult to ignore [and] are involved in many of today's most serious problems..." (Gacono, 2000a, p. xix).

Cleckley is credited with developing the modern clinical construct of psychopathy in his work *The Mask of Sanity* (1941). As summarized by Hart and Hare (1998), Cleckley's conceptualization of the psychopath was descriptive:

Interpersonally, psychopaths are grandiose, arrogant, callous, superficial, and manipulative; affectively, they are short-tempered, unable to form strong emotional bonds with others, and lacking in empathy, guilt, or remorse; and behaviorally, they are irresponsible, impulsive, and prone to violate social and legal norms and expectations (p. 25).

In responding to criticism that existing diagnostic criteria neglected persistent personality traits, Hare (1980) developed the Psychopathy Checklist (PCL), followed by revised versions in 1991 and 2003 (PCL-R, 2nd Edition) to operationalize the concept of psychopathy based largely on Cleckley's original model (Arrigo & Shipley, 2001; Shipley & Arrigo, 2004). To ensure accurate diagnosis, the PCL-R requires expert observer (i.e., clinical) ratings, based on a semi-structured interview, a review of case history material (e.g. interviews with family members and employers, criminal and psychiatric records), and supplemental behavioral observations (Hare, 2001). Specific scoring criteria are used to rate each of 20 items according to the extent to which they apply to a given individual. Today, the PCL-R stands as the only instrument used to operationalize psychopathy in adults with demonstrated reliability and validity (Bodholt, Richards, & Gacono, 2000; Hare, 1991, 1996, 1998; Kosson, Smith, & Newman, 1990; Salekin, Rogers, & Sewell, 1997; Schroeder, Schroeder, & Hare, 1983; Siegel, 1998).

The clinical assessment of psychopathy is achieved through an examination of several trait and behavioral criteria. Among the 20 behaviors and traits assessed by the PCL-R are a

grandiose sense of self-worth, glib and superficial charm, pathological lying, conning and manipulateness, lack of remorse or guilt, need for stimulation, impulsivity, promiscuous sexual behavior, early behavior problems, callousness, lack of empathy, and criminal versatility (Hare, 2003). Utilizing these defining criteria, the PCL-R enables an evaluation of psychopathy from a two-factor perspective. Described by Meloy (1992) as aggressive narcissism, Factor 1 constitutes those items on the PCL-R that indicate egocentricity and a callous and remorseless disregard for the rights or feelings of others (Hare, 2003). Factor 2, described in terms of a chronically unstable and antisocial lifestyle, is characterized by an irresponsible, impulsive, thrill-seeking, and antisocial lifestyle (Hare, 2003).

Research indicates that even in childhood, psychopaths are impulsive, aggressive, emotionally isolated and that their craving for excitement is curtailed neither by social norms nor by conscience (Bender, 1947; Cleckley, 1941; Hare & Cox, 1978; Klinteberg, Humble, & Schalling, 1992). Meloy (1992) and Stone (1998) suggest that a significant factor involved in the psychopath's predisposition to aggressive behavior is the lack of attachment or affective bonding with others. Moreover, the unique combination of antisocial traits and impulsive/aggressive behavior is the foundation for assertions that psychopaths are ideal candidates for perpetrating predatory violence (Meloy, 1992). In sum, the psychopath's empathy deficit, egocentricity, grandiosity, sense of entitlement, impulsivity, general lack of behavioral inhibitions, and need for power and control produce a proclivity for asocial, antisocial, and criminal acts (Hare, 1998).

Meloy (1992) suggests that psychopaths are inclined toward criminal and predatory violence for several reasons. First, the inability to empathize with victims allows the individuals harmed to be devalued. Second, the aggressive tendencies of the psychopath combined with the

individual's detachment from the experience of others are predictors of cruel, interpersonal exchanges. Third, the psychopath's ability to detach from others increases the likelihood that victims will be treated much like an object in a private ritual. As a result, the reactions of psychopaths to the damage they have inflicted upon individuals or society in general "are more likely to be cool indifference, a sense of power, pleasure, or smug satisfaction than regret or concern for what they have done" (Hare, 2001, p. 11).

The development of psychopathy is explained by a wide variety of cognitive, psychodynamic, behavioral, and biological models (Comer, 1995). For example, childhood abuse, neglect, and the witnessing of violence are factors identified by many researchers as central to the development of violent, antisocial behavior including traits associated with psychopathy (Widom, 1997). Likewise, the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders IV-TR (2000) suggests that child abuse or neglect can increase the likelihood that conduct disorder during adolescence may develop into psychopathy during adulthood (Shipley & Arrigo, 2004). Psychodynamic theorists assert that psychopathy is caused by a failure of the "superego"; that is, the part of the psyche that constitutes the "moral precepts of our minds as well as our ideal aspirations" (Brenner, 1973, p. 35; Comer, 1995). According to this perspective, the individual does not develop an adequate conscience resulting in poor behavioral controls that can have deleterious consequences later in life (Widom, 1997). Behavioral theorists contend that adaptively effective coping styles within abusive homes (e.g., desensitizing oneself against feelings, exhibiting manipulative behavior in order to get what is needed) leave the individual ill-equipped for pro-social adult relationships and activities. Other studies suggest that biological factors are associated with the development of psychopathy. For

example, the autonomic and central nervous systems of persons with psychopathy have been found to respond more slowly than those without the disorder (Comer, 1995; Raine, 1998).

Notwithstanding their apparent differences, explanations for the development of psychopathy are not mutually exclusive (Shiple & Arrigo, 2004). Lykken's (1995) findings support the notion that these individuals experience less anxiety than others and are therefore less likely to learn socially acceptable behaviors that, in others, develop from a desire to avoid the anxiety created by others' disapproval. Some researchers suggest that psychopaths cannot learn from feelings of anxiety or empathy because they do not experience these sentiments (Comer, 1995). Importantly, there are a wide range of individual and behavioral differences among psychopathic subjects and many clinicians and researchers agree that contemporary measures of the disorder identify a heterogeneous group of individuals (e.g., see Blackburn, 1998; Gacono, 1998; Gunn, 1998; Steuerwald & Kosson, 2000).

In general, the variety of individual and societal contexts in which psychopathy exist is virtually unlimited (e.g. see Hare, 1998, p. 196). Despite the challenges presented in identifying psychopathy among a heterogeneous population, understanding the value of accurately assessing psychopathy is crucial within institutions, hospitals, and correctional facilities (Gacono, 2000). However, accurate assessments are problematic for two fundamental reasons. First, there exists some confusion regarding diagnoses for psychopathy and other closely-related psychological constructs. For example, Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) and sociopathy are erroneously used as synonyms for psychopathy, notwithstanding the wealth of published literature that differentiates psychopathy as a qualitatively and quantitatively unique construct (Arrigo & Shipley, 2001). While an examination of the distinction between psychopathy and other constructs (i.e., ASPD) is well beyond the scope of the present study, the differences are

important and they have been discussed at length by other scholars (see e.g., Gacono et al., 2000; Millon et al., 1998). For purposes of this article, the term "psychopathy" is used only when appropriate, mindful of its distinctive character from other psychiatric conditions or constructs.

A second factor that makes the diagnosis of psychopathy difficult is the behavior of the individual. The deceptive nature of psychopathic subjects often complicates diagnoses and requires the use of pertinent independent historical information for thorough assessment (Meloy & Gacono, 2000). Because a goal of the psychopathic patient is usually to gain a more dominant position in relation to his (or her) environment – whether it be a person, an institution, or a legal proceeding (Meloy, 1992) – the forensic psychologist is vulnerable to gross manipulation in a treatment setting. In light of the aforementioned challenges to accurate assessments, the use of trained clinicians and formal diagnostic protocols are prerequisites for any application of the PCL-R or its variants. Importantly, PCL-R evaluation findings should be integrated with other personality and risk assessment data (Gacono, 2000).

As briefly discussed, a strong association between psychopathic diagnoses and violence in males has been demonstrated by a number of researchers. Findings observed by Hare (1993) suggest that while psychopaths constitute approximately 1% of the general population, they are responsible for more than 50% of all serious crimes committed. However, many psychopaths operate on the fringes of legality, successfully avoiding contact with the criminal justice apparatus while manipulating the system and other people to achieve their own selfish needs (Cleckley, 1982; Meloy, 1992). Therefore, as a matter of convenience and practicality, considerable research on the relationship between psychopathy and violence involves an examination of offender populations in correctional custody and their respective recidivism rates following release.

To illustrate, in their meta-analytic review of 18 empirical studies investigating the relationship between the PCL-R and violent and non-violent recidivism among prison releasees, Salekin, Rogers, and Sewell (1996) concluded that the ability of the PCL-R to predict violence was unparalleled in the literature on the assessment of dangerousness. Harris, Rice, and Quinsey (1993) found that the PCL-R was the single most important predictor of violent recidivism among 618 offenders released from a maximum security unit and pretrial assessment center. Other studies present similarly supportive findings for the predictive and explanatory capabilities of the PCL-R for violent and recidivistic outcomes (e.g. Harris, Rice, & Cormier, 1991; Harris, Grant, & Lalumiere, 2001; Hart, Kropp, & Hare, 1988; Hemphill, Hare, & Wong, 1998; Rice, 1997; Serin, Peters, & Barbaree, 1990).

To be clear, studies of psychopathic individuals have not been limited to correctional populations only. Indeed, psychopathy research has expanded to include industrial and organizational (I-O) psychology (Babiak, 1995, 2000; Gustafson & Ritzer, 1995). I-O psychology is the study of the behavior and interaction of people within work settings. As Babiak (2000) noted, non-institutionalized psychopaths are known for their ability to elude detection therefore representing a more difficult population to investigate. Babiak (2000) reported the summary findings of six longitudinal I-O studies conducted within six corporate organizations. Using the PCL-R as an assessment instrument, several individuals scored above the cutoff for psychopathy. Interestingly, those identified as psychopathic scored high on Factor 1 (i.e. the aggressive narcissism component) and moderate on Factor 2 (i.e. the antisocial personality component) (Babiak, 2000). When interpreting these findings, Babiak (p. 180) observed that "they displayed the personality traits ascribed to psychopaths without exhibiting antisocial acts or a lifestyle typical of criminal psychopaths, which would have attracted the

formal attention of society.” One of the psychopath’s distinct “career phases” noted in the I-O psychology literature is the manipulation phase in which the psychopath enjoys playing the role of “puppet master” (Babiak, 2000). This individual creates a false image of him- or herself as an ideal employee based on one’s own sense of loyalty and competence, and constantly seeks recognition from power holders and support and adulation from others (Babiak, 2000). As discussed later, these observations will prove particularly salient in the case of Robert P. Hanssen.

Research in I-O psychology moves the debate on psychopathy beyond the confines of correctional and institutional facilities into various occupational sectors. One of these relevant, though unexamined, sectors is the field of policing. Admittedly, little scholarly effort has been devoted to exploring the nature of psychopathy within the domain of law enforcement. While there is a wealth of research on psychopathy, police corruption, and violence respectively (including convincing evidence of a relationship between psychopathy and criminally violent behavior), case studies on psychopathy and violence within the occupation of policing appear non-existent. Accordingly, the present study seeks to explore these issues in greater detail, endeavoring to advance society’s understanding of these under-examined phenomena. Toward that end, the story of Robert P. Hanssen – including his early childhood, family and religious life, law enforcement career history, and criminal involvement – are chronicled below.

#### **THE CASE OF ROBERT P. HANSSEN**

Robert Philip Hanssen, born April 18, 1944, was the only child of Howard and Vivian Hanssen (Havill, 2001). The son of a former Chicago, Illinois Police Department officer, Robert was raised by his parents in a quiet neighborhood in northwest Chicago. Accounts of his mother describe a quiet and gentle woman (Shannon and Blackman, 2002); however, Robert’s



relationship with his father was tumultuous, characterized by instances of humiliation as well as physical and emotional abuse, according to family members and close associates (Vise, 2002).

Vivian Hanssen stated that relationship problems between her husband and their son were exacerbated because Robert never objected to the way his father treated him (Havill, 2001).

Rather than confronting his father and the disturbing way he was treated by Howard Hanssen, Robert isolated himself in his bedroom and immersed himself in reading books involving spies and espionage (Vise, 2002). From a very early age, Robert Hanssen was a loner with a patterned history as a victim of abuse at the hands of his father (Wise, 2003).

On at least two occasions, Howard Hanssen physically abused his son as a way to teach him how to be a man (Mailer & Schiller, 2002). When Robert was approximately six or seven years old, his father spun him around until he became dizzy and vomited. Howard then pushed his son's face into the vomit to let him know the feeling of defeat (Mailer & Schiller, 2002; Wise, 2003). On a separate occasion, Howard Hanssen forcefully pulled Robert into the air by his ankles, stretching his son's hamstring until he involuntarily urinated on himself, leaving Robert feeling hopeless and ashamed (Vise, 2002).

Robert was also a victim of emotional abuse. When Robert was old enough to drive, his father took him to take his driver's license test. However, as Robert later learned, his father bribed the officials so that his son would fail (Mailer & Schiller, 2002). His father's deception made Robert feel that the world was unfair and designed to deny him any control over his personal life and destiny (Shannon & Blackman, 2002). Throughout his time at home, Howard Hanssen frequently withheld praise for and support of his son, repeatedly criticizing Robert's scholastic efforts and general schoolwork (Vise, 2002). Family and friends recalled that as a young boy Robert was afraid of Howard Hanssen and that the father's repeated displays of abuse

and humiliation directed toward Robert continued throughout the boy's childhood (Havill, 2001; Wise, 2003). Commenting on Robert's troubled upbringing, Dr. Stephen Hersh, a Washington D.C. psychiatrist known for treating many FBI agents, observed the following:

"The person you are supposed to trust and identify with is doing everything from hurting you to humiliating you, and it's confusing. It creates the beginning of negative feelings about individuals who are supposed to be your protector and authority figures... This is a child who had repeated experiences that totally destroyed his capacity to identify in a healthy way with male authority figures" (Vise, 2002, p. 8).

Although Robert Hanssen suffered frequent physical and emotional abuse from his father, he did experience companionship and comfort among his grandparents (Mailer & Schiller, 2002). As a youth, Robert shared an interest in ham radio with his father and grandfather, later joining a small ham radio club while in school (Vise, 2002). While Robert enjoyed the company of this group, he remained quietly secluded from his classmates and had few close friends (Shannon & Blackman, 2002).

Classmates stated that Robert was left out of group activities and rarely interacted with other students (Havill, 2001). Others recounted that Robert carried himself with an air of self-importance, as if he enjoyed being different from his contemporaries (Mailer & Schiller, 2002). Robert was most comfortable when he isolated himself from the company of others (Wise, 2003). While in the sixth grade, he experienced the death of his best friend, Paul Steinbachner (Shannon & Blackman, 2002). Many interviews with Robert's family members and classmates revealed that Paul's death had a significant impact on Robert's personality (Shannon &

Blackman, 2002). Indeed, Robert Hanssen's personal loss served to deepen his chronic isolation and acute withdrawal from others (Davey, 2002).

Notwithstanding his generally reserved and unassuming demeanor, Robert was also known as a daring risk taker. His friends reported that at times his impulsive tendencies scared them so much that they feared for their lives (Havill, 2001; Shannon & Blackman, 2002). For example, Robert often enjoyed racing his car with others in an attempt to determine how fast his vehicle could run while negotiating turns and chasing girls, irrespective of traffic signals and speed limits. On another occasion, Robert and an acquaintance were firing rifles into a bullet trap in the basement of a friend's home. Unexpectedly, Robert picked up one of the guns, stood approximately twelve feet from the trap and fired the rifle, sending shards of concrete flying through the air (Vise, 2002). Robert's friends never knew when or where this other side of Robert's personality would take charge (Havill, 2001).

Robert's father had dreams that his son would go to college, get an advanced degree, and become a doctor; he was also adamant that Robert not follow in his footsteps and pursue a career in law enforcement (Vise, 2002). Academically, Robert was a good student, often receiving higher grades than that of his fellow classmates (Shannon & Blackman, 2002). Robert's high scholastic performance continued after he was accepted into college but was maintained only when it mattered to him. A former teacher recalled an event that occurred during Robert's first year of college, while he was taking a final exam:

"[Robert] didn't like the first question, so he walked out of the exam and went to the gym. He spent two hours working on his left-hand lay-up. That was Robert. Inner challenges were more important to him than those presented to him by others. If he had a

challenge, he would put his heart and soul into it. Otherwise..." (Shannon & Blackman, 2002, p. 37).

Despite his acute resentment towards his father and a growing disdain for academic life, Robert endeavored to meet his father's expectations (Mailer & Schiller, 2002). Fearing his grades might decline, Robert twice broke into the university's administrative building and altered his school records (Vise, 2002). Soon thereafter, he changed his academic focus to the dental profession and was later accepted to the School of Dentistry at Northwestern University (Vise, 2002). During his brief stint in dental school, Robert received acceptable grades; however, he eventually became disillusioned with pursuing a career in the medical and allied health sciences.

While attending college, Robert was employed as a recreational therapist in a state mental hospital. At this time, he established a relationship with a nurse, Bonnie Wauck, whom he later married (Shannon & Blackman, 2002). Within days following their wedding in 1968, Bonnie learned that Robert was having an affair with an ex-girlfriend. Robert begged for her forgiveness and she agreed to keep the affair a secret so that they could move on with their lives together (Vise, 2002). This pattern of infidelity, contrition, and absolution repeated itself throughout their relationship (Vise, 2002).

Two weeks following his marriage and after much thought, Robert dropped out of dental school. As Hanssen anticipated, this decision infuriated his father who viewed his act as an expression of ultimate betrayal (Havill, 2001; Vise, 2002). Nevertheless, Robert resumed his studies at Northwestern University and in 1971 earned an M.B.A. Following graduation, Robert found employment with an accounting firm in Chicago. Despite his assignment to a large and important account, he considered his work mundane and tedious (Vise, 2002). After a

dissatisfying and short-lived period of corporate employment, Robert P. Hanssen turned his career attentions to the occupation of law enforcement and the Chicago, Illinois Police Department. In absolute defiance of his father's wishes, Robert joined the force in 1972. For Robert P. Hanssen, the goal was not merely to become a patrol officer but to surpass his father's achievements within Howard Hanssen's chosen profession (Shannon & Blackman, 2002).

Robert Hanssen was assigned to the department's internal affairs unit and was charged with investigating law enforcement corruption and unethical practices. Although the unit was despised by most officers within the Chicago, Illinois Police Department, Hanssen believed he was smarter than the other agents there and welcomed the opportunity to prove this (Vise, 2002). Robert Hanssen considered himself a "white knight" on the force: an honest cop ridding the department of shady practices and dishonest agents (Classuen-Rogers & Arrigo, 2004). However, much like in his youth, Robert once again was viewed as an outsider. Many considered him to be overly aloof and glib (Vise, 2002). The individual responsible for hiring Robert distrusted him, believing Hanssen to be an undercover operative working for another law enforcement agency seeking information about the officers under investigation: "I was suspicious of him because he was so much more well-qualified than the other people that were sent in...he just knew it all. [Robert] was quiet [and] a slick kind of guy. He was analyzing me analyzing him." (Shannon & Blackman, 2002, p. 47). In a separate account, the same supervisor recalled: "I always felt something was wrong, so we held Hanssen on a short leash" (Havill, 2001, p. 92). Eventually, Robert came to believe that his career ambitions extended beyond the Chicago, Illinois police department. Dissatisfied with his work and angered by his lack of recognition within the department (and upon the advice of his supervisor), Robert applied for a position with the Federal Bureau of Investigations (Vise, 2002).

After successfully completing weeks of training in Quantico, Virginia, Robert P. Hanssen was sworn into the FBI in 1976 and pledged his loyalty to the organization. An abiding fascination with the Soviets led him to seek an assignment with foreign intelligence (Vise, 2002). Three years later, Hanssen was assigned to the Soviet analytical unit, also known as Division 3A (Wise, 2003). Within this unit, he was given investigative duties: monitoring KGB (Komitet Gosudarstvenoy Bezopasnosti) and other Soviet intelligence officers who specialized in classified scientific and technological information. In addition to tracking the activities and methods of known Soviet intelligence operatives, Robert Hanssen evaluated each Soviet intelligence officer for purposes of possible recruitment (Mailer & Schiller, 2002; Shannon & Blackman, 2002). His sensitive duties also supplied him with senior level security clearances, including unrestricted access to a wide variety of classified information sources (Wise, 2003).

Although Robert Hanssen possessed the intelligence necessary for the job, he lacked the social skill and charm needed in a recruiter. Fellow agents considered Hanssen strange, referring to him as "Dr. Death" and "The Mortician" given his penchant for wearing only starched, black suits (Shannon & Blackman, 2002). Many regarded him as arrogant, superficial, and narrow-minded (Vise, 2002). Still others remarked that Hanssen smiled frequently but said little (Wise, 2003). He did not associate closely with his colleagues, never assisted them when requested, and elected not to socialize with those in his work groups (Mailer & Schiller, 2002). An FBI division chief described Hanssen as "a lurker," always hovering at the side of any gathering (Wise, 2003). Further, investigators reported that "[Hanssen] felt angry, and he felt his brilliance was being overlooked. And he felt much smarter than the people around him" (Vise, 2002 p. #). Robert was too arrogant to excel within the FBI, too self-righteous to associate with those whom he felt were inferior to him, and he harbored too strong a desire for power (Havill, 2001; Mailer &

Schiller, 2002). According to Robert Hanssen, the definition of power was the capacity to humiliate others (Shannon & Blackman, 2002).

Throughout most of their adult lives, both Robert Hanssen and his wife, Bonnie, were devout members of Opus Dei, a small organizational sect within the Catholic community (Grier, 2001). Through private rituals and weekly confessions to a spiritual director, members seek personal growth and eternal salvation. Some fellow Opus Dei members alleged that Robert's religious devotion was contrived and that he viewed the sect in a cynical and calculated manner (Havill, 2001). His mother and friends believed that Hanssen's devotion to this religious sect was unusual if not outrageous (Mailer & Schiller, 2002). Some investigators contend that the organization appealed to Hanssen because of its enigmatic character, clandestine nature, and ritualistic composition (Mailer & Schiller, 2002; Shannon & Blackman, 2002). Others suggest that the organization enhanced Robert's already inflated self-image (Havill, 2001). Regardless of the explanation, investigative research indicates that Robert Hanssen's religious practice provided him with a sense of spiritual cleansing, allowing him to engage in espionage as a highly valued escape (Vise, 2002).

Robert Hanssen's criminal liaisons with the Soviet government began in 1979 when he initiated an offer to sell classified information to a Soviet military intelligence agency using a false name (Shannon & Blackman, 2002; Wise, 2003). Over the next twenty years, Hanssen developed and executed a cunningly elaborate method of communication and a surprisingly simple system of "dead drops" wherein he provided classified documents and government materials in exchange for payments and further instructions without directly meeting Soviet agents (Vise, 2002; Wise, 2003). The Soviets recognized that Hanssen was a man who desperately sought attachment, companionship, and friendship (Buncombe, 2002). Soviet agents

were careful to praise his intelligence and skills, and to thank him generously for whatever he gave them (Mailer & Schiller, 2002).

In early 1980, Robert Hanssen's wife discovered his criminal behavior and confronted him about it. Hanssen told Bonnie that he was selling the Soviets useless information in return for money (Vise, 2002). Upon her urging, he falsely promised her that he would terminate his association with the Soviets and donate the money to charity. Instead, Hanssen developed a way to deceive his wife while continuing his espionage. Family members and friends reported that Hanssen's wife suffered from intense anxiety and paranoid delusions, believing that evil forces were prepared to get her at any moment (Wise, 2003). By manipulating her emotions and fueling her anxieties, Robert Hanssen was able to frighten Bonnie away from his work affairs while cloaking his espionage in order to maintain power (Vise, 2002). Hanssen also confessed his activity to his Opus Dei priest who instructed him to keep his confession private, pray for forgiveness, and donate his ill-gotten money to charity (Buncombe, 2002). Interestingly, Hanssen's brother-in-law, an FBI agent in Chicago, learned from family members that Robert Hanssen kept thousands of dollars in cash at home and was spending money very liberally (Vise, 2002). Reluctantly, his brother-in-law reported this unusual activity to his superiors in the FBI. Despite these discoveries and admissions, Hanssen's suspicious behavior was never formally investigated.

On the surface, Robert Hanssen seemed to enjoy a stable family life. Robert and Bonnie Hanssen raised a large family, consisting of three daughters and three sons (Shannon & Blackman, 2002). Robert Hanssen enjoyed spending time with his children and often bragged about their academic achievements to colleagues at work (Mailer & Schiller, 2002). To others, Hanssen presented the image of a devoted husband and fine gentleman. Both Robert and Bonnie



Hanssen gained the respect and admiration of parents in the private Catholic preparatory schools their children attended (Vise, 2002). According to many in their community, the Hanssen's led a modest, normal existence (Wise, 2003).

Notwithstanding the outward appearance of a health family life, the Hanssen household was deeply troubled. Investigators suggest that Robert Hanssen was a master manipulator, living out his sexual fantasies and conducting international espionage, while maintaining the image of a family man with a perfect suburban life (Vise, 2002). For example, Hanssen exhibited sexually-deviant and voyeuristic behavior throughout his relationship with his wife. He often fantasized about other men watching him have sex with Bonnie and shared this obsession with his best friend, Jack Hoschouer, in approximately fifty to sixty e-mails per day (Havill, 2001; Vise, 2002).

Robert Hanssen viewed Jack Hoschouer as a "real man" because he had served in the military during Vietnam, and because he had greater sexual experiences than Robert (Vise, 2002). Hanssen was eager to demonstrate his sexual prowess to his friend. On numerous occasions, Hanssen invited Jack to secretly watch him have sex with Bonnie and later placed a secret video camera in the Hanssen bedroom so that his friend could view these erotically-charged escapades from the family's television in the den (Vise, 2002). Others reported that Hanssen intended to give his wife a date rape drug so that Hoschauer could then sexually assault her (Mailer & Schiller, 2002).

Unbeknown to Bonnie, Robert Hanssen wrote and posted nude photographs of and several sexual fantasies about his wife on adult internet sites (Shannon & Blackman; Vise, 2002). Hanssen's sexual compulsions extended to other women as well. While visiting Jack Hoschouer in Germany, Robert Hanssen hired the services of a prostitute and participated in group sex with

his friend (Vise, 2002). Further, on two separate occasions he touched the exposed bosom of his sister-in-law while she breast fed her baby. As a result, she requested never to be alone with Hanssen again (Mailer & Schiller, 2002; Vise, 2002). Dr. Alen Salerian, a Washington D.C. psychiatrist who spent many hours interviewing Robert Hanssen, believed that Howard Hanssen's admonitions that his son be a "real man" propelled Robert to an obsessively dysfunctional preoccupation with pornography (Willing, 2001).

From 1990 to 1992, Robert Hanssen had an affair with a female dancer he met in a strip club. Although the woman, Priscilla Galey, later claimed that they were never involved sexually, Hanssen spent in excess of \$100,000 on assorted gifts for her during their two-year relationship (Shannon & Blackman, 2002). On one occasion, Hanssen flew Priscilla to Hong Kong so that they could spend time together on an FBI-related business trip (Vise, 2002). Investigators observed that Robert Hanssen's illicit affair with Priscilla Gailey bolstered his sense of self-importance and allowed him to boast about his criminal accomplishments (Shannon & Blackman, 2002; Wise, 2003). The relationship ended after Priscilla reunited with a previous boyfriend and moved away from Hanssen's home near Washington, D.C. However, his courtship with Priscilla resulted in the disruption of Robert Hanssen's marriage and additional religious counseling for both Hanssen and his already distressed wife (Rodriguez, 2001).

Evidence suggests that Robert Hanssen's secretive communications with Soviet and Russian agencies lapsed for several years during the 1990s (Wise, 2003). Following this brief period of inactivity, he resumed his espionage in earnest following the same techniques as before (e.g., dead drops). By this time, though, Hanssen was a senior FBI agent with high-level security clearances, benefiting from privileged access to sensitive intelligence information for many years (Vise, 2002).

As his spying grew more intrepid, Hanssen divulged virtually any type of classified data available to him. For instance, he provided the Soviets with the complete program by which the United States planned to ensure the survival of the president and the government in the event of nuclear war (Vise, 2002). In addition, Hanssen sold the Soviets a highly classified computer program used by the intelligence community to track and monitor global criminal and terrorist activities for which he received \$100,000 and personal praise from the head of the KGB (Havill, 2001; Vise, 2002).

Ultimately, Hanssen's espionage resulted in the deaths of several intelligence agents. Among the highly classified secrets he disclosed were the identities of three double agents working for the United States. Two of these agents were recalled to the Soviet Union under false pretenses, interrogated, and summarily executed (Shannon & Blackman, 2002; Wise, 2003). Robert Hanssen was also linked to the arrest of perhaps twenty-two other operatives (Rodriguez, 2001). Hanssen knew these individuals and likely knew their families (Mailer & Schiller, 2002).

Over the course of two decades, Robert Hanssen received a total of approximately \$1.6 million in cash and diamonds in exchange for national security secrets (Rodriguez, 2001). National security authorities claimed Hanssen's breach of classified information was the most devastating in the United States' history (Havill, 2001; Vise, 2002, Wise, 2003). Notwithstanding the extremely serious nature of his crimes, Hanssen felt no guilt with respect to his actions; instead, he believed all was fair game in the world of international espionage (Vise, 2002). Hanssen's criminal activities came to an abrupt halt when he was eventually caught by FBI agents in the act of dropping off classified information for Russian agents near his Washington D.C. home on February, 18, 2001. Neither impressed nor shocked, Hanssen

appeared to almost gloat as he looked at the arresting agents and stated, "What took you so long?" (Buncombe, 2002, p. 14).

None of the usual motives for espionage (greed, ideology, or revenge) seemed sufficient to explain the multiple deceptions Robert Hanssen engaged in at work, at home, and at church (Havill, 2001). Although Robert stated in court that he was motivated by pecuniary gain, investigators suggest that his ego was central to his criminal tendencies (Eggen, 2001). He took pride in knowing the intricacies of the espionage trade, reveled in the power he exercised, and was drawn to the ambiguities of deceit, sin, and redemption (Eggen, 2001; Havill, 2001; Wise, 2003).

According to a former FBI agent who knew Robert Hanssen for twenty years, money was not the reason behind his espionage. Instead, he believed that Hanssen's true desire was "to play the spy game better than anybody ever played it before" (CNN.com, 2002). Typically, Hanssen was bored at work but he found the life of international espionage both exciting and exhilarating (Shannon & Blackman, 2002). Moreover, Robert Hanssen regarded the FBI as a corrupt father figure and turned to the Soviets to validate his intelligence and self-importance in much the same way that he turned to Jack Hoschouer to confirm his masculinity and sexual prowess (Vise, 2002). Clearly, Robert Hanssen led a duplicitous life. As Hanssen himself proclaimed: "I am like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and sometimes Mr. Hyde takes over" (Vise, 2002, p. 225).

For his crimes, Robert Philip Hanssen was found guilty and sentenced to life in prison without parole in May, 2002. A plea agreement spared him the death penalty. During his sentencing, Hanssen expressed regret to his family yet demonstrated no remorse toward the FBI, the nation, or the individual victims whose lives ended as a result of his actions (Vise, 2002).

## INTEGRATING PSYCHOPATHY AND THE CASE OF ROBERT P. HANSSEN

Robert Hanssen's case history contains patterns of early childhood abuse, emotional and social withdrawal, sexual promiscuity and a manipulative and deceitful lifestyle. Moreover, his criminal behavior was unquestionably extreme, resulting in the willing compromise of national security secrets and the brutal deaths of at least two individuals. Overall, Hanssen's personal background and ongoing conduct – although most assuredly riddled with dysfunctional components – represent a disturbing portrait of a complex man, warranting additional scrutiny and further understanding. As such, mindful of our previously enumerated orientation regarding the psychological construct of psychopathy, Hanssen's behavior and personality are examined within the context of this psychiatric condition. In doing so, we seek to demonstrate the utility of exploring his criminal and violent wrongdoing through the explanatory "lens" of psychopathy.

Researchers note that aggressive narcissism is a distinctive personality trait firmly associated with psychopathy (Hare, 1991; Hart & Hare, 1998a; Meloy & Gacono, 2000). Within his academic, personal, and professional experiences, there is overwhelming and consistent evidence that Robert Hanssen exhibited overly egocentric behavior. For example, while in school, Hanssen attained success and applied himself as a matter of self-priority. Moreover, he afforded secondary importance to the requirements imposed upon him by others and in some instances disregarded them entirely. To illustrate, Hanssen walked out of a university final exam simply because he did not like the questions presented to him. His disdain for the nature and external demands of academic life also resulted in his decision to leave medical school, although he did ultimately succeed in attaining a master's degree in business administration.

Robert Hanssen's grandiose self-image was most apparent in his adult life. While employed by the Chicago, Illinois Police Department, he was aloof and glib and was distrusted

even by the individual responsible for hiring him. Robert Hanssen believed he was smarter than the others in his department and was resentful that his merit was not recognized to his satisfaction. Similarly, during his twenty five-year career with the FBI, Hanssen always viewed himself as more intelligent than other bureau agents, and believed his superiority was being unjustly overlooked. Comparable to the "manipulation phase" described in accounts of psychopathic behavior in work settings (e.g. Babiak, 2000), Hanssen created a self-image that was not an accurate portrayal of reality. He felt that he deserved praise and recognition for his work efforts, yet he was rejected by his colleagues. In part, Robert's self-righteous and arrogant attitude prevented him from becoming a recognized, successful leader in his profession. Although he achieved moderate success, Robert Hanssen was never able to overcome the limitations of his personality; shortcomings that distanced him from his colleagues. Hanssen's psychological need to be valued, acknowledged, and esteemed was intensified by his continued alienation, resulting in increasingly strong antisocial expressions of self-importance and superiority.

Relatedly, Robert Hanssen's desire for power and control were unusually strong. As a youth, he experienced a deprivation of control as a result of his father's emotional and physical abuse. Robert Hanssen's choice to reject his father's demands that he avoid the field of law enforcement and pursue a medical career ostensibly represents a product of his yearning to forcefully assert himself and establish control in his own life. Linked to his emotionally and physically abused background – especially the incessant examples of his unworthiness and devaluation as provided by his father – Robert Hanssen associated power with projections of dominance and the humiliation of others. While working in the FBI, Hanssen was disciplined for physically and angrily confronting a female employee, forcefully dragging her down a

hallway by the arm when she left a meeting after he demanded that she stay (Wise, 2003). As an adult, Robert Hanssen demonstrated his affinity for power through his deeply arrogant demeanor, his sadistic emotional and sexual manipulation of his wife, and numerous extra-marital affairs. Moreover, Hanssen wanted to live his fantasy as a masterful spy. Consequently, he felt most potent and in control when he accessed classified information and provided secrets to Soviet and Russian agents using his self-devised techniques while adroitly evading detection and apprehension. Indeed, while in prison, Hanssen admitted to his psychiatrist that he had enjoyed the sense of power he experienced as a Russian "mole" in the FBI; Hanssen pulled all the strings and situated himself in a position "where he could regard himself as the puppet master" (Wise, 2003, p. 303).

As previously noted, facets of Robert Hanssen's egocentric lifestyle were revealed within his relationships with other women. For instance, Hanssen's two-year assignation with Priscilla Galey served his ego-based needs by enabling him to feel a sense of self-importance and to indulge in fantasies surrounding money, power, and notoriety. Hanssen's obsessive-compulsive and erotically sadistic inclinations toward his wife were additional indicators of his egocentric temperament. He enjoyed flaunting his sexual prowess to others (e.g., Jack Hoschouer, via the Internet), and was stimulated in terms of power and control by these highly sexualized actions. In short, an elevated sense of self-worth, a desire for increasing power, and a need for all-consuming control served to both establish and fuel his identity throughout much of his life.

In addition to his grandiose self-image, Robert Hanssen engaged in a wide array of deceitful and manipulative activities. Three of the most prominent character traits associated with psychopathy are conning, manipulative, and deceitful, and they are likely to be strongly

evident in the personal background of those suspected of this disorder (Meloy, 1992). Robert Hanssen deceived an entire professional law enforcement organization while he engaged in espionage against the United States. For twenty years, Hanssen effectively concealed his secretive and illegal dealings with KGB agents. He developed carefully planned techniques and strategies in order to pass information on to foreign agents, while presenting the duplicitous image of an industrious coworker and loving husband to his colleagues and his community. When confronted by his wife, Hanssen deceived Bonnie by telling her that he was selling useless information to the Soviets, that he would end his criminal involvement with them altogether, and that he would give the ill-gotten money to charity. Moreover, he sadistically manipulated his wife's emotional well-being by playing on her fears and anxieties in order to distance her from his clandestine work activities. Hanssen deceived his wife and family by concealing his extra-marital affairs, including his two-year relationship with Priscilla Galey. He misled his community into believing he was a model citizen and husband. And, arguably, Hanssen manipulated his best friend, Jack Hoschouer, by cajoling him to engage in sexually explicit and clearly voyeuristic behavior involving Hanssen's wife, Bonnie. Collectively, these actions indicate that Hanssen consistently deceived his family, his colleagues, and ultimately himself throughout the course of his adult life.

As evidenced by his case history, Robert Hanssen demonstrated versatility in his criminal conduct. Although many psychopaths avoid formal contact with the criminal justice system, their personality is compatible with a propensity to violate many of society's rules and expectations (Hare, 1998). Indeed, Hanssen disregarded and violated laws, rules, and moral values for years. Relatedly, there are some indications of early delinquent behavior, although Robert had no formal contact with the police as a youth. While still in school, he surreptitiously



entered university offices and changed his grades on at least two occasions. He willfully and blatantly disregarded public laws by irresponsibly racing his car through city streets at high speeds.

As an adult, Robert Hanssen's criminal proclivities expanded exponentially. His acts of international espionage included a wide range of illegal activities, and he committed these crimes over a very long period of time while carefully avoiding detection. In particular, Hanssen demonstrated both skill and alacrity through his sundry criminal actions, including the theft of government documents and programs, as well as the illegal disclosure of a variety of highly classified reports.

Among the several traits associated with psychopathy, callousness and lack of remorse are most prominent (Cleckley, 1982; Hare, 2000; Gacono, 2000). Although Robert Hanssen knew the difference between right and wrong, he demonstrated neither empathy nor remorse for his actions. Instead, he exhibited satisfaction with and pride at the success and exhilaration he experienced by deceiving so many people for so long. When he was arrested in the act of dropping off and disclosing highly confidential government secrets for Russians agents, Hanssen taunted his FBI colleagues for being slow to catch him. He exhibited no remorse for his efforts to compromise U.S. intelligence activities and acknowledged no blameworthiness with regard to the persons executed and imprisoned as a result of the information he divulged. Although Hanssen realized his actions ended human lives, he rationalized that the casualties were a consequence of the risks inherent in the spy trade. Further, as long as he confessed his sins to Opus Dei priests and sought forgiveness, he believed he would remain in a state of perpetual grace.

In addition to his lack of empathy in response to his criminal wrongdoing, Robert Hanssen exhibited little regard for the feelings or welfare of others in his life. He demonstrated a callous disregard for the sentiments of his wife by intentionally and sadistically fueling her anxieties in order to distance (and distract) her from his work. As evidenced by his extramarital affairs, Hanssen's desire for the company of other women negated his wife's need for a devoted, monogamous relationship. Moreover, without concealing his wife's name, Hanssen posted nude photographs of Bonnie and sexually explicit fantasies about her on the Internet. This was a clear violation of her privacy and trust. In his professional life, Robert Hanssen was unwilling to help others when asked and he harbored disparaging attitudes towards his coworkers. Even as a young boy, Hanssen exercised little to no respect for the feelings of his friends, and seemingly had fun at their expense (e.g., running his car with passengers at excessively high speeds; engaging in other risky behavior that physically endangered himself and others).

Throughout his life, Robert Hanssen was a loner: uncomfortable in social situations and most content when in seclusion. During his childhood, Hanssen had few companions and rarely interacted with other classmates. The death of his childhood friend, Paul Steinbachner, had a profound affect on Hanssen, resulting in his further withdrawal from others. Moreover, the physical and emotional abuse he suffered at the hands of his father resulted in a deep social isolation and a profound repression of feelings. Hanssen's asocial tendencies persisted throughout his professional career. He made no effort to meaningfully socialize with his work associates and earned disparaging nicknames for his odd dress habits and aloof, superficial behavior. His shallow affection towards others was a defining feature of his personal life and professional career. Admittedly, he maintained strong bonds with his family, his friend Jack

Hoschouer, and (temporarily) Priscilla Galey. However, his social support network did not extend beyond this point.

Notwithstanding Robert Hanssen's overly asocial and antisocial tendencies, he craved recognition and acceptance from others. KGB and other Russian intelligence agents quickly realized Hanssen's need for praise, acceptance, and notoriety, and they used this knowledge to flatter him. In time, his relationship with these agents resembled something of a friendship. Russian agents frequently praised Hanssen's cooperation and they thanked him generously for the information he provided. Indeed, he lived off their financial and emotional kindness and he felt he had finally found a reliable partner as his acts of espionage increased. Moreover, Hanssen sustained himself psychologically through his self-image of superiority and his belittling attitude towards others. He also sated himself psycho-erotically through the many sexual fantasies he conjured surrounding his wife. As these examples descriptively illustrate, Robert Hanssen engaged in a parasitic lifestyle. According to the PCL-R, individuals who frequently demonstrate aspects of this personality trait fit the profile for psychopathy (Gacono, 2000; Hare, 2003).

As a juvenile and adult, Robert Hanssen exhibited numerous instances of impulsive behavior. Evidence of poor behavioral control is also a defining characteristic in a psychopath (Hare, 2003). Numerous examples from Hanssen's case history illustrate a strong proclivity toward impulsivity. During adolescence, he often raced his car at high speeds and on one occasion he recklessly fired a rifle at close range, endangering himself and a friend. As previously noted, Hanssen physically attacked a female FBI agent at work in an uncontrolled, albeit rare, public display of rage. Hanssen impulsively pursued sexually adventurous conduct in his bedroom and on the Internet, and he initiated numerous affairs with other women. Clearly,

his thrill-seeking and impulsive conduct manifested itself in repeated acts of espionage and conspiracy with Soviet and Russian intelligence agencies while working for the FBI. An analysis of these behaviors suggests that Robert P. Hanssen gave little or no forethought to and showed little or not insight into the consequences of his actions

Robert Hanssen demonstrated a constant need for stimulation, finding many activities tedious and boring. As a youth, he enjoyed risky, thrilling activities such as racing his car in city streets. Once again, Hanssen's behavior descriptively aligns with one of the criterion for psychopathy: as clinically assessed via the PCL-R, frequent speeding tickets and enjoyment in reckless driving are elements of a proneness to boredom or a need for stimulation (Gacono, 2000). Interestingly, Hanssen demonstrated this behavioral trait throughout his life.

For example, in school Hanssen was easily bored with academic endeavors unless they appealed to his own interests and sensibilities. His need for constant stimulation also is strongly noted early on in his professional career. To illustrate, although provided an important work assignment, Hanssen considered his first job in accounting mundane and yearned for more exciting work. In part, the boredom he experienced with his first job led him to seek employment with the Chicago, Illinois Police Department. He was elated by the possibility of eliminating corruption from the force and viewed himself as ideally suited for the job. However, Hanssen quickly grew tired of his lack of recognition within the agency and believed his career aspirations would be better served by pursuing more invigorating prospects. Consequently, Hanssen applied for employment with the FBI; a career and lifestyle about which he had fantasized since he was young. As an agent in the FBI, Hanssen had access to highly sensitive information and was able to work in the clandestine field of Soviet foreign intelligence. Although he craved predictability, order, and structure, he thrived on the exhilarating, secretive,

and adventurous nature of his work. Indeed, Hanssen's liaisons with the KGB afforded him the opportunity to realize his long-held fascination with spying. Arguably, his need for constant stimulation was fulfilled during his career in foreign intelligence and the risky "cat and mouse" games he pursued within the world of international criminal espionage.

Closely linked to his need for ongoing stimulation and his poor impulse control, was Robert Hanssen's history of sexual promiscuity. Hanssen shared his erotic and obsessive fantasies about his wife, Bonnie, with his friend, Jack Hoschouer. Hanssen's sexual escapades manifested themselves in the form of voyeuristic behavioral tendencies. Indeed, on several occasions he invited his friend to watch him have sex with his wife. Although Hoschouer declined, Hanssen implored his friend to have sex with his wife, Bonnie, even planning to drug her in order to facilitate the act. Moreover, Hanssen's sexual obsessions extended beyond his relationship with Bonnie. Notwithstanding the emotional harm to his wife and children, Robert Hanssen pursued affairs with other women. Further, during a visit to Germany he and his friend, Jack Hoschouer, paid a prostitute for group sex. As evidenced in Hanssen's case history, he had an unhealthy and chronic preoccupation with pornography, exemplified by the posting of nude photographs of his wife on the Internet and the video recording of his sexual encounters with Bonnie in their home. On more than one occasion, he inappropriately touched his sister-in-law's exposed bosom while she was breast feeding her baby. In short, Robert P. Hanssen repeatedly exhibited sexually obsessive thoughts and promiscuously compulsive behaviors throughout his adult life.

Experts in the field of psychology report that among individuals who are psychopathic, there is often evidence that they lack realistic, long-term goals (Hare, 2003). Notwithstanding his 25-year employment with the FBI, Robert Hanssen's career was marked by planned deceit

and manipulation. Ostensibly, Hanssen had no "exit" strategy for his consistent acts of espionage and believed his calculated schemes would likely never be detected. Indeed, Hanssen's patterned and long-term deceptions indicate that he would have continued his criminal activities had he not been apprehended. Further, Hanssen's repeated sadistic sexual obsession with his wife and numerous extra-marital affairs indicate the degree to which he lacked realistic goals. Did Hanssen believe he could conceal his illicit affairs and sexually victimize his wife indefinitely? The facts revealed by Hanssen's case history indicate he maintained entirely unrealistic expectations.

### **PROVISIONAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

The previous inquiry regarding the life story of Robert Philip Hanssen is suggestive for understanding psychopathy and violently extreme criminal conduct, especially in the policing context. However, generalizing from the preceding commentary is at best a provisional and incomplete exercise. This notwithstanding, the apparent linkages identified among Hanssen's wrongful behavior, his personality structure, and the psychopathy construct are, at the very least, quite intriguing. Accordingly, several speculative implications stemming from the analysis are worth examining, particularly with respect to law enforcement ethics.

Accordingly, in what follows, a number of limited observations regarding the effective prediction, prevention, and explanation of police corruption are tentatively explored. In addition, the foregoing remarks are evocative, especially as society endeavors to comprehend the nature of extremely violent crime perpetrated by law enforcement personnel. On this matter, a number of provisional observations are put forth calling for future research on the phenomenon of violence as it relates to the occupation of policing, mindful of the well-established association violence and psychopathy share.

### **Predicting, Preventing, and Explaining Police Corruption**

The case of Robert P. Hanssen vividly demonstrates a disturbing and chilling reality: police officers can (and do) commit integrity violations that have devastatingly serious consequences for the law enforcement field, for the general public, and for society at large (Claussen-Rogers & Arrigo, 2004). The extant research on police misconduct is abundant and it highlights the problems associated with controlling or preventing police corruption (McCormack, 1996; Sechrest & Bonafacio, 1991; Punch, 1995). Notwithstanding these challenges, unethical behavior must be accurately predicted in order to effectively prevent continued corruption in the area of law enforcement. In addition, determining the causal reasons for such integrity-based violations is fundamental to the development of effective screening strategies aimed at detecting and abating this behavior (Arrigo & Claussen, 2003). Just as importantly, these efforts must be fully supported by departments and precincts across the country if society is to practically and meaningfully address the potentially destructive problems posed by officer misconduct (e.g., Hanssen) in the occupation of policing.

Some investigators suggest that intervention at the preemployment screening stage may be the best solution for the prediction and prevention of police corruption (e.g., Claussen-Rogers & Arrigo, 2004). Much of this research highlights the need for improved psychological testing tools during the preemployment assessment process. The call for better psychological testing instruments is supported by research that identifies the importance of several personality characteristics in the prediction of counterproductive work performance.

For example, experts note that conscientiousness is strongly associated with pro-social job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Miller, Griffin, & Hart, 1999). Further, antisocial personality traits are of particular interest due to their connection with a wide variety of negative

job-related behaviors (Griffin et al., 1998). Consequently, assessment tools (e.g., the Inwald Personality Inventory, the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-II) presently utilized in law enforcement screening processes that do not fully account for these respective traits may be inadequate as testing strategies, especially when it comes to validly and reliably screening out potentially corrupt officers during the preemployment evaluation process.

Give the above concerns, some investigators suggest that the Revised-NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R) is better suited for law enforcement preemployment screening (Arrigo & Claussen, 2003; Black, 2000). This is because of its demonstrated capacity to assess a constellation of personality traits known as the "Big Five:" conscientiousness, neuroticism, extraversion, openness, and agreeableness (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Costa & McCrae, 1992). Other commentators recommend incorporating the NEO-PI-R and the IPI (Inwald Personality Inventory) into a single instrument because of their combined ability to accurately assess both conscientiousness and antisocial personality traits respectively (Claussen-Rogers & Arrigo, 2004). As these and other important studies suggest, there is substantial and promising interest in controlling the problems associated with unethical police behavior through the use of improved psychological assessment techniques. Had Robert P. Hanssen been exposed to such preemployment screening, one can only speculate about his likely employment with the Chicago, Illinois Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigations. Arguably, his nefarious, psychopathic tendencies would have been predicted and, quite possibly, averted.

As previously noted, accounting for unethical law enforcement behavior is critical if society is to establish effective solutions targeted at reducing the potential for police corruption. As this article proposes, psychopathy provides a useful, if somewhat limited, framework for better comprehending extreme criminal conduct perpetrated by law enforcement officials. While



the foregoing analysis is both suggestive and provocative along these lines, the phenomenon of psychopathy within the occupation of policing remains largely unexplored. As such, research aimed specifically at improving the appropriate administration of psychological testing during the preemployment screening phase for would-be officers, as well as research investigating police corruption in general, may likely benefit from a better understanding of psychopathy as it presents itself in the routine and everyday work environment of law enforcement. Here again, the insights of psychology might prove particularly salient. For instance, recent studies emanating from the industrial-organizational realm seem especially promising in their efforts to more fully explain the manifestation (and maintenance) of psychopathy within various occupational settings (e.g. Babiak, 1995, 2000).

Although there is utility in bringing the benefits of psychology to bear on the criminal justice problems of police corruption, the success of such an approach largely depends upon the extent to which the law enforcement community is receptive to these efforts. Historically, academic psychology has been an indecisive and uncertain participant in research involving the police (e.g., Bartol, 2001). In addition, psychologists have been turned away by the sometimes demeaning, suspicious, and cynical reactions of policing personnel to social and behavioral scientists engaged in law enforcement research (Claussen-Rogers & Arrigo, 2004). Meanwhile, the effects of police misconduct serve to erode public confidence in law enforcement communities across the United States, representing a demoralizing and devastating cost that county, state, and federal law enforcement authorities can ill-afford to neglect or forestall. Clearly, the violently extreme criminal behavior of Robert Philip Hanssen amply exemplifies this concern. Consequently, police administrators and criminal justice policymakers would do well to recognize the benefits of continued research into officer misconduct and the need for improved

psychological testing. Only through efforts such as these will law enforcement agencies become better equipped to predict, prevent, and explain police corruption.

### **Studies on Violence and Psychopathy: The Need for Future Research**

As noted at the outset of this article, the construct of psychopathy may be inadequate to fully explain Robert P. Hanssen's extreme criminal conduct. Indeed, while psychopathy is empirically linked to violence and criminal recidivism, the concept itself ostensibly fails to provide a comprehensive explanation for the kind of egregious and violent acts perpetrated by this criminal mastermind. We submit that more complete answers to such acute conduct reside in the deeply intricate dynamics of violence. Violence can be defined as "any action or structural arrangement that results in physical or nonphysical harm to one or more persons" (Iadicola & Shupe, 1998, p. 26). Arguably, espionage falls well within the scope of this definition. Hanssen's actions resulted in the deaths of two individuals and endangered the physical safety of many others. Even within his personal relationship with his wife and family, Hanssen was responsible for inflicting a considerable amount of emotional harm upon them. Moreover, he jeopardized the well-being of an entire nation by divulging information that seriously compromised the protection and defense of the United States.

Admittedly, there are many unknowns. Notwithstanding the relative simplicity of the definition provided, violence implicates complex societal and individual factors that have yet to be fully investigated and understood (Englander, 2002). For example, Toch (1992) presents several insightful typologies regarding violently prone individuals. While certainly useful in their own right, these typologies alone do not adequately account for the sort of extreme behavior as exhibited by individuals like Robert Hanssen. Moreover, the very insightful interpersonal, institutional, and structural components of violence as examined by Barak (2003) offer only

limited utility when attempting to explain Hanssen's violently extreme behavior as manifested through his repeatedly fiendish acts of criminality. Simply stated, we do not yet know enough about psychopathy and violence to provide a convincing account of their relationship, let alone an explanation for their overlapping relevance to the phenomenon of police misconduct. Indeed, the case of Robert Philip Hanssen indicates that additional research is sorely needed if the questions posed by his seemingly inexplicable psychopathic violence are to be more thoroughly comprehended.

Psychopathy and violence are related; however, they also are distinct concepts (Gacono, 2000a). While the preceding analysis tentatively suggests a relationship between these two constructs, the fact remains that ascertaining what this association is mostly remains elusive, especially within the context of law enforcement. Accordingly, researchers who purport to understand the macrological contexts of violence may benefit from future inquiries into the genesis and manifestation of psychopathy, and investigators who purport to understand psychopathy may benefit from future inquiries into the macrological contexts in which violence emerges and sustains itself. We contend that some much needed cross-fertilization here might yield important theoretical and practical insights, useful to the culture, organization, and occupation of policing.

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